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ART NEEDLEWORK

EMBROIDERY FOR BEDROOMS.

II.



NE of the decidedly attractive pieces of needlework shown at the rooms of the Society of Decorative Art was a bed-cover made of fine soft crash, so neatly joined in lengths that the stitches were almost imperceptible, and embroidered in fine crewel with a branching "all-over" design of singular grace and beauty. This style of embroidery has

no special name, but for want of a more specific title, has been called "grandmother's crewel-work," repeating, as it does, the old conventional roses and carnations that spring from a common stem, and are varied by pretty flourishes, all produced in grayish blues and red-dish pinks and amber yellows, with greens that suggests the stalk of growing lavender. The price set upon this quilt was one hundred dollars, and the worker is reported to have said that her labor was barely covered by the sum affixed. I see, however, no difficulty in undertaking such a piece of bedroom decoration if one has fair acquaintance with the methods of ordinary Kensington stitches. The chief difficulty to an outsider lies, of course, in finding an appropriate design, and in having it applied to the ground for working. Where conventional coloring is so freely used—and one would think it no shame to perch a blue bird on a rose-colored branch, or to bestow yellow foliage on a gray-green blossom—the artist has certainly a comfortable liberty of choice. I recall various square and oblong designs, enclosing scrolls or geometric patterns, scattered throughout the pages of *THE ART AMATEUR*, that might, with a little interesting study, be adapted for such a purpose as is above described.

To show what ingenuity has done, a lady, sitting at breakfast one morning in her country home, was invaded by a persistent peddler, so intent on vending his wash-cloths, woven in squares, to be cut apart when used, that she could only get rid of him by investing one dollar in the purchase of a dozen. The coarse cream-colored web of woven cotton, as it lay upon the floor, suggested to her a ground for needlework. With her needle alone, having no pattern indicated, she worked upon the meshes of each square some flower or sprays plucked in her daily walks. In the wide connecting threads between the squares she interwove blue ribbons. With threads of coarse darning cotton she knotted a fringe around the borders, and her bed-cover for a set of "cottage" furniture came in due time to be more admired than its modesty had ever dreamed of!

A very effective bed-cover has been made in Bolton sheeting, to imitate one dating from "old colony times." The design is a tree, with conventionally grouped branches so disposed as to cover the entire ground of the stuff. On these branches are seen paroquets, birds-of-paradise, and other showy birds, the whole cut from French chintz of the best quality, and worked down with washing silks and crewels. There are now to be bought in New York a variety of these beautiful chintzes, having large bold patterns in soft hues upon a ribbed ground of cream-color, which present exactly the idea of this ancient handiwork. In using them for appliqué, curtains and bed-covers might be made to match, although continually varied in detail. Bolton sheeting is bought at one dollar a yard in double width, the French chintz at a dollar and a half a yard, also in double width. English filosomes are somewhat superseded for bordering appliqué by a new silk called filo-floss, which is easier to work with.

Still another bed-cover, easily made and highly effective, is a stout linen sheet, divided into squares and oblongs by lines of brier-stitch or herring-bone in china blue crewel, leaving the central division larger than the rest. In each one of the irregular divisions thus obtained, work with crewel in two shades of blue, pointed with stitches of blue washing filosome, geometrical patterns not too minute in detail. If desired, this cover may be made in unbleached muslin, with appliqué patterns cut from dark blue linen. In either case pillow-covers are made to match.

A linen sheet, treated in similar fashion, had poppies and ragged robins worked in each square; black silk was used for the veining, and an edge of coarse linen lace was sewed around. Where it is desired to take a little additional pains, the worker may secure a beautiful result by pulling the threads marking the divisions, and working them in hemstitch. Outline work, as suggested in the last paper, is the most simple method of arriving at an effect in this branch of decoration. To vary the result, a darned-in background is often added.

Of this work a few varieties may be described: A design of large passion-flowers, outlined in chocolate brown crewel on crash, has a background of old gold threads of crewel darned in wavy lines. The artichoke plant is the subject of a spirited design, outlined on linen in shades of orange, the background

covered with arrow-head stitches of dull yellow crewel, suggesting the seeds of the plant. A quilt made in England of écru homespun cotton has conventional designs of white linen thread covering the ground. The effect in this is produced by the endless variety and different direction of the stitches taken. A cover made of unbleached muslin has an orange tree and fruit appliqué in old gold serge, the background darned in with parallel lines of shaded yellows and browns.

Cross-stitch is much used upon huckaback, crash, linen, and satin sheeting, for bedroom decoration.

The entire outfit of a chamber may be done in Russian patterns, with red and blue ingrain knitting cottons, upon any one of the materials named. It is generally carried out in borders worked over canvas, the threads afterward withdrawn. I have seen bed-curtains, valance, dressing-table cover, and widow curtains,

covers, pincushions, lounge pillows, and fine hand towels, as well as to many articles used in the dining-room.

Darned netting, one of the earliest of English industries, is still used, a sixteenth century bed-cover having been recently copied here. It has twelve squares, each one with a figure representing a month of the year, outlined in colors. Old Florentine silk table-covers, with borders of netted silk darned in different colored flosses, which may be seen in more than one bric-à-brac shop in New York, are admirable models in colors, design, and execution.

Painted Nottingham lace is a novelty in bedroom draperies, but until I have seen specimens that seem more in keeping with the standard of modern art-work, it is not to be recommended in this list. Rather should Madras muslin, in all its varieties of faint hues, quaint designs, soft folds, and lovely texture be advanced as the chief among transparent draperies. If needlework be added to this ground of Madras muslin, it must be in the shape of outlines, or darned lines of filosome introduced upon the woven pattern of a plain cream-tinted stuff.

Drawn-work, as applied to bedroom decoration, is without doubt both elegant and substantial. An English lady, lately resident in Lima, has seen the "Chola," or Indian girls, spend months and even years over a single piece of darning "à jour," and the specimens of nun's work still sent here from South America are marvels of spider-web delicacy. The pattern, which appears to be appliqué on an open work of threads, is formed by drawing the design on linen or even linen cambric. This is worked down, and button-holed around, forming conventional flowers with open-worked centres. Some threads of the stuff are afterward cut and withdrawn from it, those that are left being wrought into a fine strong lace-like texture. Sometimes the open-work is darned with queer figures of birds, beasts, and mythical animals.

In Lima, brass bedsteads are in use, draped with curtains formed of darned "point à jour," lined with blue or rose-colored silk. A silk quilt of rose satin broché with white, fine down pillows covered with rose-colored Chinese silk, pillow-slips of linen drawn-work, open at each end, with sheets similarly adorned, form the couch equipment of a wealthy citizen.

Ordinary bed linen can very easily be beautified by a narrow decoration of drawn-work at the upper end of the sheet, with the initials or monogram of the owner added in one corner.

Marking linen is an old-fashioned art that is too much neglected nowadays, especially since a well-known Coventry manufacturer is sending out advertisements of names woven to order in old English script, either scarlet or blue, at an exceedingly small price. These, by the way, are very nicely done, and may be sewn upon every article of household linen, as they come woven in narrow strips of white. But nothing takes the place of graceful old letters from manuscripts of the middle ages. The scribes of those early days produced an infinite variety of ornamental letters with surrounding scroll-work. Alphabets representing children in many charming attitudes were in vogue during the early part of the sixteenth century, the Basle printers scattering them freely about their publications. Holbein has bequeathed to the world one of these alphabets, as have Albrecht Dürer, Anthony von Worms, John von Calcar, and other equally distinguished artists. Alphabets of simpler form are to be had; and surely the work bestowed in marking our linen would not be thrown away, and if we might venture to suggest, would be more satisfactory in the end than a crash tidy embroidered with bulrushes and sunflowers.

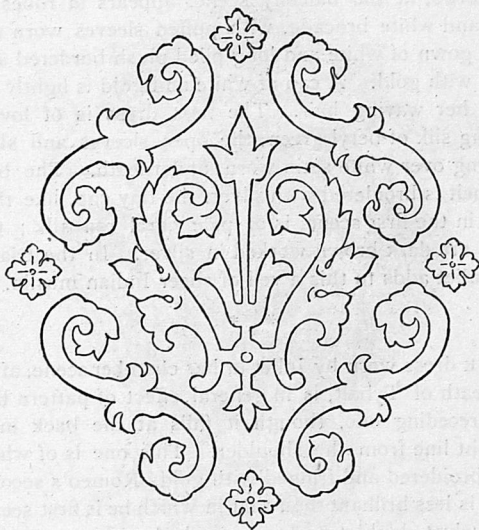
CONSTANCE CARY HARRISON.

NEEDLEWORK NOTES.

THOSE useful bags which are a part of almost every woman's shopping equipment appear among other novelties made of substantial and homely bed-ticking. For these the narrow blue-and-white striped ticking, cut about eight inches long and ten inches wide, is chosen. The blue stripes are covered with gilt braid and the white stripes ornamented with point-russe stitch in colored silks—green, red, blue, and orange—spanning the white at small intervals, the broad edge of the ornament resting on the gilt braid. The result is as pretty and rich a combination of colors as one could wish. The bag is then made up with colored satin—red, brown, blue, or green—and is gathered with a puckering string at the top. The bed-ticking part is also partly lined with satin, and the lined corner is turned over.

Round straw boxes with covers are transformed into handsome collar boxes by lining them with silk after they have been embroidered outside with a wreath of daisies, cornflowers, forget-me-nots, buttercups, or any other favored flower. The top is ornamented with a bow of satin ribbon of some contrasting color.

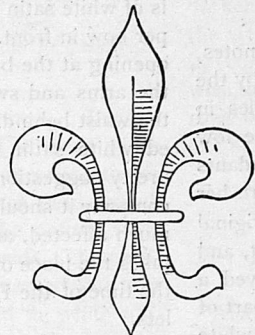
For pincushions in daily use the hemstitched and fringed doyleys of mome cloth, either white or gray, embroidered in



FRAGMENTS FROM A READING-DESK COVER.

PRESENTED BY CHARLES V. TO THE MONASTERY OF ST. JUST.

worked in Russia, upon coarse linen stuff, after this fashion. The curtains had a central design, representing a number of quaint little maidens clad in red and blue playing some national game beneath the branches of a fir-tree. The dressing table had a design of crowing cocks in scarlet, arranged in a procession between bands of blue, with vines of yellow. The bed-cover represented a sleighing scene, amid a snowy landscape. It cannot be denied that "primary colors" play an important part in the color scheme of these draperies. They are ab-



ENGLISH FIFTEENTH CENTURY NEEDLEWORK.

ECCLIASTICAL DESIGNS EMBROIDERED IN GOLD AND SILK ON BLACK VELVET.

olutely brilliant in general effect, but the amount of color might easily be reduced to suit the "greenery-gallery-Grosvenor-gallery" requirements of to-day.

Russian work is especially suited to the decoration of bedroom towels. Some of the deep red and blue borders now worked for that purpose are exact reproductions of patterns found in continental museums.

Holbein work, a variety of Russian work, the stitches so taken that both sides are found alike when finished, is applied to toilet

outline stitch in English silks, are used. The designs are usually humorous, and, if original, so much the better. The desirability of such covers lies, of course, in the fact that they can be often washed.

Children's bibs are made of the oblong momie cloth towels with borders. These are cut out to fit the neck, and the front is ornamented with some of the many prevailing scenes out of child life in outline stitch.

The broom brush is one of the favorite objects of decorative fancy. An easy and pretty method of rendering it attractive is by means of two embroidered pieces of felt or other material cut to fit the broad sides and connected together with puffs of satin which shape themselves to the brush.

How to dispose of Christmas, Easter, and birthday cards is among the puzzling questions of the season. Various wire racks have been brought out for this purpose, but the effect, as a wall decoration, has not been agreeable. This can be remedied by lining the wire rack with crimson satin slightly puffed, and arranging the cards so that the satin will make a sort of frame. Above is a crimson-covered border, on which is embroidered the word "Souvenir." Below is a corresponding piece embroidered with flowers and hung with tassels.

Stamped plush leaves and flowers are coming into use among the handsome ottomans and chair seats. These are produced with the most careful attention to the drawing, and are applied with tinsel braid mingled with colors. Two beautiful banner screens had a decoration of autumn leaves in stamped plush imitating perfectly their colors and forms. The arrangement of such a design depends, of course, on the individual's taste and skill; in this case the leaves were grouped as if growing on a broken branch.

The use of tapestry cretonnes in appliqué continues to increase, the cretonne being transformed by the embroidery and tinsel braid which are used. A branch of leaves and flowers, for example, is cut out and applied to blue satin, and treated in the different outlines with embroidery in crewels. The tints chosen simply emphasize the under color. Such treatment is left very much to the taste of the worker, and with it very striking effects can be produced. The outer edge is retraced with tinsel braid. Stripes of cretonne thus treated are used with the richest materials. Sofa pillows of plush, for example, have a diagonal stripe of the cretonne on an ornament in one corner.

The Decorative Art Society has recently produced some beautiful work. The chief piece is a two-leaved screen, with panels of dark olive green velvet. Distributed over the surface is a vine disposed in scrolls, so ingeniously varied that no repetition is apparent. This vine is worked in olive silks, and the flowers, which are single conventionalized forms, are also widely varied and wrought in shaded yellows. Here and there are perched birds worked in Kensington stitch in shaded browns leading out to yellow on the breasts, and occasionally brown insects are introduced. The screen is mounted in ebonized wood.

Another noteworthy piece of work is a sofa pillow in light olive brown silk. The surface of this is treated in light brown silk floss, scarcely differing from the ground in tint, covering it with small oblong blocks in outline. These are crossed with diagonals, and all the points of intersection caught down with a crimson thread. This treatment covers the entire surface except the design, which is left, and consists of a graceful branching plant, with leaves and long drooping petals in the flowers. These are simply outlined with slight veining in brown, crimson, and green silks, used apparently indiscriminately, and giving an agreeable sense of color. A small band of olive plush serves as a border, with a fuzzy silk trimming as a finish.

A scarf table-cover at the Decorative Art-rooms, on yellow satin diagonal, may offer some valuable suggestions. The decoration of the border is a band of scroll-work, which might have been taken from some elegant Renaissance design. This is worked in darned stitch with brown, yellow, and pale red filloes. Below is a small border of pale red plush, with a heavy fringe of yellow.

Among smaller pieces, distinguished chiefly for beautiful handiwork rather than by the importance of the design, may be mentioned a crash tidy, divided by hemstitching into squares three inches in diameter. Each of these squares includes a conventional design worked in shaded greens, which contrast so finely with the natural color of the crash as to give it an importance in the presence of much more elaborate work. A second piece is a white satin mouchoir case. On the upper side there is no decoration, but a few branches of pinkish white clover, with the leaves lying across the lower right-hand corner. The embroidery is exquisitely wrought and the design simple, but faithful both in color and drawing. A third piece is a work-bag, the lower part of fine linen crash. On this are embroidered and illustrated the nursery legend of Elizabeth, Lisbeth, Betsy, and Bess, in colored silks, with comical fidelity. There may be mentioned also sheets of cardboard, with an oval cut out of the centre suitable for a photograph. These are covered with yellow diagonal and dark red velvet, and embroidered about the oval with small branches of the palmetto in shaded browns.

Housekeepers fond of dainty napery cannot find anything more pleasing than doyleys of fine linen, fringed on the edge and hemstitched within, describing a central square. The corners of this hemstitching do not intersect, and much trouble is thereby saved to the needlewoman. The inside is divided into diamonds, with brownish yellow silk in outline stitch, and inside of the diamonds are central rings with rays and four-leaved clovers, also in outline stitch. Other doyleys have bunches of cherries, flowers, and conventional designs, but these are all done in brown tints, scarcely varied by other colors, and in the finest of silks. Still others have Chinese and Japanese pottery designs, done in the lighter blues, reds, and olive greens.

There is no finish prettier for a banneret or other small work than couchings of filloes or crewel. A straw silk banneret may be edged with couchings of green filloes or crewel, caught

down with silver tinsel thread, and a tinsel braid of silver and green on the outer edge. Arabesques on table-covers are appropriately made in this way with couchings. The advantage lies in being able so easily to effect a combination of colors as well as to cover spaces rapidly.

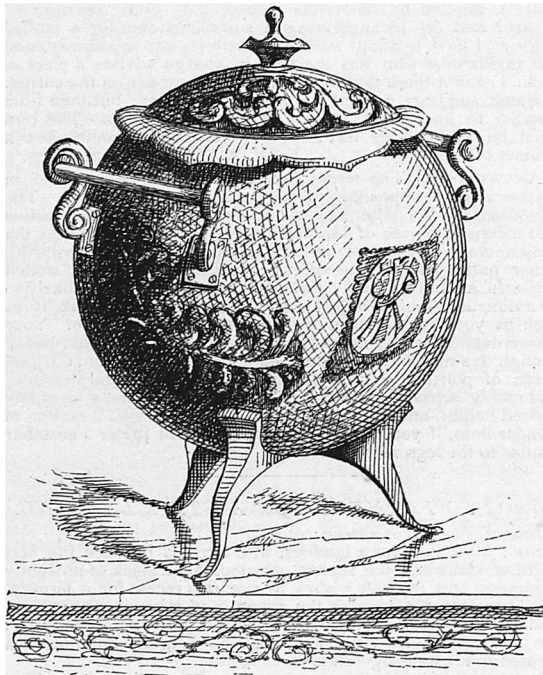
Small panels are made by inserting painted silks, after the Pompeian designs, which can be found printed in colors, and which were produced as Christmas cards earlier in the season. It is the method of framing these on the large silk backgrounds which constitutes the most important novelty. This is done with gilt braids of several sizes—for example, two small braids inclosing a wider braid. These are afterward treated with colored silks in point-russe stitch within diamonds made by narrow tinsel thread mixed with colors. Each braid has a separate ornamentation. The outer braids are more simply treated—for example, being crossed at intervals with black, as distinguished from the diagonal lines of the centre braid.

Correspondence.

COCOA-NUT SHELL CARVING.

Editor of *The Art Amateur*:

SIR: It may interest some of your readers to know that the shell of the common cocoa-nut furnishes an inexpensive and excellent material for carving sugar-bowls, spoon-receivers, drinking-cups, match-boxes, snuff-boxes, buttons, combs, and a great variety of other useful and pretty things. The accompanying illustration represents a sugar-bowl of carved cocoa-nut shell, mounted with silver, which excited much admiration as a unique and attractive wedding present. Amateurs who wish to experiment in this direction should select as symmetrical a cocoa-nut as possible, saw off the rough or "monkey-face" end, and at once take out all the "meat"; because,



COCOA-NUT SHELL SUGAR-BOWL.

if left too long, it is apt to make the shell crack. File away the rough outer coat until the shell is tolerably smooth. Sketch your design on the surface with ink. Then, with a wood-engraver's lozenge-shaped tool, cut all around the design, more or less deep, according to the thickness of the shell. After this cut away the background evenly, so as to leave the design in relief, and then finish the carving with chisels and such other tools as are suited to the particular work. The tool must be guarded by resting the thumb on the work, as the material is hard and comes away in small particles. After the carving is completed, finish off with files and pumice-stone, and polish with linseed oil and powdered pumice-stone.

L. A. KIEFER, Indianapolis, Ind.

EASTER DECORATIONS.

Editor of *The Art Amateur*:

Can you oblige us in the next issue of *THE ART AMATEUR* with some hints for Easter church decorations?

SEVERAL SUBSCRIBERS, Cincinnati, O.

ANSWER.—Decorations such as wreaths, texts, banners, crosses, and other designs may be carried out with great success with flowers. For a text made in flowers, an economical and yet a very effective plan is to cut the letters out in cardboard, and paint them over with the same color as the flowers you purpose using. When dry, wash over with strong liquid glue, and before this dries take the heads of the flowers only and press on the letters, taking care to cover the cardboard entirely. A flower may be broken or torn, and it will answer just as well as the best. For a banner or device on a wall, a groundwork might be made entirely of the petals of scarlet geraniums, the letters or design of white flowers. If you wish to keep your design for further use, small everlasting flowers would be best. Moss forms the best green ground. White is essentially the color for Easter, and lilies the flowers of all others for decoration. We have seen small banners made entirely of them. A framework was covered with white cardboard; on this was sewn white cotton;

upon this sprays of maidenhair fern, so that the ground was lightly covered, no two sprays overlapping each other; on these a cross of lilies was placed the full width of the frame. Wreathing for Easter may be made by sewing moss on strips of brown paper cut the right width and length; the flowers and leaves are sewn in; if plenty of good damp moss is used, the flowers retain their freshness for a great length of time.

Few country churches have a reredos, and, as the east end is the one upon which the greatest taste and skill should be expended, it may be useful to suggest a temporary and decorative one, which, with some decoration on the font, would be sufficient for a small church. Let a framework of thin laths be made, the length of which should reach from one side of the east window to the other, and make it two and a half feet deep, or whatever depth may be necessary to fill the space. Divide this into three parts. Make the centre twice the width of the sides, and on each side this centre place a lath, so that they will be four or five inches apart; cover the whole frame with red or white. You should now cut a cross, or any other suitable device, and cover it with flowers for the centre; a panel of flowers on each side over the frames, and a similar panel on the two outsides, or omit the centre panel and have only the outside one; then add a wreath made very neatly on paper round the whole.

A permanent ornament of this kind may be made with a little needlework at a small cost. Take a piece of red or white serge cloth the size required, trace on it your design in the centre, a floriated cross of lilies and passion flowers or a floriated medallion and the sacred monogram, and work over with arrasene. This is an excellent material for quick effective work, and far less expensive than silk. Two or three shades of green, and two of gray, and one of yellow, would work a centre of lilies. The arrasene may be worked in like crewels, in long stitches of nearly an inch in length, or laid on and sewn down with cotton; this latter method is the best for the border. Texts made in the same manner, in handsome letters, would be effective, and any simple ecclesiastical scroll, worked in two or three shades, would more than repay the trial.

THE DANGERS OF PICTURE-RESTORING.

Editor of *The Art Amateur*:

SIR: An experienced furniture dealer gave me a mixture of oil, varnish, etc., to brighten up some oil paintings, but the "stuff" has "crawled" and dried in drops and streaks, so that in some places I can scrape it off. Of course it looks bad, and I ought to have known better than to use it. What will remedy the trouble?

AN OLD SUBSCRIBER, Fair Haven, Vt.

ANSWER.—It is impossible to advise you safely without knowing more about the condition of the paintings and the nature of the "stuff" you put on them. An article on picture cleaning and restoring, in *THE ART AMATEUR* for April, 1880, might afford you some useful hints.

MAKING SCREENS.

Editor of *The Art Amateur*:

SIR: In the dreary winter season, and during the long cold days of spring, it is satisfactory to find an occupation which is useful, artistic, inexpensive, and so engrossing that one quits it with reluctance and returns to it with renewed pleasure. Few people will deny the usefulness of screens in the ill-built and draughty houses of the present day; and even if not wanted as a personal anti-rheumatic precaution, still they are handsome and salable articles to present to those insatiable ladies who are always getting up "bazaars."

A full-sized screen generally consists of four panels, each about seventy-two inches high, and twenty-four inches wide; but a very pretty and useful one is made of three panels, forty-four by twenty inches, a size large enough to screen the back of a chair from draughts, but not too high to be seen over. The first thing to be done is to decide on the size you prefer and to have a wooden framework made; any ordinary carpenter would be capable of this, and a great many boys would find it a charming occupation for their own hands. You then stretch canvas tightly across the frame, nailing it neatly round the edge. The canvas costs about five pence a yard. Size the canvas with melted glue, which will make it stiff and take away any creases. The most usual way of making screens is to cover the canvas with sheets of black paper on one side and dark red on the other. The paper is put on with paste which has been strained; size may also be added to it. Colored pictures and scraps are then pasted on the black side, and uncolored prints on the red side. Of course water-color drawings are useless, as the colors would run. The screen is then sized, and when the size is quite dry, varnished. A colorless size may be made (for those who object to the yellow tint of glue size) by stewing down old white kid gloves in a little water; when they are quite reduced to a pulp, strain the water, which should be strong enough to become a jelly when cold; use warm, and go over every part of the screen quickly and carefully; you should varnish in a warm room, especially when the weather is frosty; if the frost gets in, the varnish will suddenly present the appearance of milk. Sometimes the varnish is thick and does not work easily; in that case place the cup containing the varnish in a basin of hot water; a little turpentine may also be added. Varnish should always be used warm, and the brush with which it is put on should be thoroughly clean, dry, and warm. Try to put it on as evenly as possible, taking great care to go over the whole surface. The screen is finished by a narrow border of stamped leather or of gimp, which is put along the top and down both sides, and is fastened at regular intervals by brass-headed nails. The panels are, of course, united by hinges; the easier plan is to put the black paper on each panel separately, then join them together before sizing and varnishing them; the hinges can be covered with strips of black paper, or black furniture braid.

The great difficulty with these screens is to put on the black